



Move Your Mood Roots and Research

Research shows that physical activity is linked to positive mental health outcomes. Physical activity can improve mood and self-esteem, decrease stress and anxiety, and help with feelings of depression and grief. It is also important for learning, concentration and social connection. Physical activity is equally important for a healthy physical body.

What is the Move Your Mood (MYM) Program: MYM is a research-based program that teaches children, youth and their caregivers how physical activity and healthy lifestyles improves mental and physical well-being. This is done through education and participation in physical activity and healthy lifestyle practices. All children and youth benefit from participating in physical activity and learning how it positively impacts their mental and physical health. The targeted MYM program is a referral based 8 week program for children and youth accessing mental health supports in the community. The Central Zone MYM program receives recommendations for participants from community agencies, including schools, and is a 8 week program for children and youth ages 10-16.

The MYM program took a bit to get to where it is today and we would like to share that history with you. There are many research articles and supporting evidence about the benefits of physical activity and mental health for adults. There is now growing evidence of the same benefits for children and youth. When the Move Your Mood program started in 2011 there was not as much evidence for children and youth which is why we started our program with a research study. This document will provide background about the program development, research findings and key learnings which brought us to where we are today.

Where it all started: The initial body of evidence that sparked the MYM program development was from the CMHA (Canadian Mental Health Association) in Ontario Minding Our Bodies. The group provided a literature review on the benefits of physical activity for adults with Mental Illness. This review followed with many CMHA's across Ontario implementing exercise programs for adults with Mental Illnesses. A few years later they also did a literature review on the benefits of Healthy Eating and Mental Illness. There was significant interest in implementing this concept into the work of Health Promotion working with the Children's Addiction & Mental Health team. The work began in 2011, when the Move Your Mood Coordinator position was developed.

Knowledge café, Literature review with Red Deer College: A research working group was implemented between AHS and the Red Deer College Psychology Department (Dr. Scott Oddie Rural Health Research Chair). The group started with a knowledge café bringing together professionals from Mental Health, Psychology, Kinesiology and Red Deer College students to explore the links between mental health and physical activity with children and youth. This provided the group with insight into what was currently happening in this area and how this project could proceed. This lead to a 4th year Psychology student completing a thorough literature review of the current research and evidence for children and youth. Upon the completion of this literature review it was determined that there was supporting evidence that physical activity would enhance children's mental wellness, but further research needed to be done in this area as not many studies were completed with this population. This lead to the first 1 year research project between Red Deer College, AHS, Red Deer Public School division and the City of Red Deer.



Move Your Mood Roots and Research

First MYM research pilot in schools 2012 The Move Your Mood Research team developed the pilot program in Red Deer and Lacombe middle schools. The 8 week Move Your Mood school pilot project was delivered from January to March, 2012 with 129 students (61% Male, 39% Female; Average Age= 12.9). At the beginning and end of the program, participants completed a measure assessing self-concept, anxiety, depression, anger, and disruptive behaviours. Participants also filled out a survey measuring their exercise habits and attitudes. A control group of 76 participants (42% Male, 58% Female; Average Age= 14) also completed all measures, but did not participate in the physical activity program. The results concluded that 61% of participants reported that physical activity improved their mood, 40% of participants' mood ratings increased a full quartile on the mood scale following the physical activity sessions. The control group reported hours of physical activity were positively correlated with their reported motivation. The results also found that 67% of participants made use of their city recreation passes and 69% of participants reported that the city passes were significantly helpful in "getting them moving". However, there were no significant group differences on the pre- and post-test measures. There were many lessons learned that would later influence the Move Your Mood program development. Some of which were; increased focus on coach training in organizing groups of children and youths, data collection, and mentorship. Smaller physical activity groups (e.g. groups of 15) will allow participants to have more interaction with group leaders and make groups easier to manage for coaches. Session length and activity duration must allow children to get at least thirty minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity. Future Move Your Mood projects will also focus on education and health literacy; specifically, understanding what is physical activity, and how to participate to improve/maintain mental health. **This pilot was in schools and did not recruit children and youth with mental health concerns. So although the pilot was fun and students benefitted from the physical activity and interaction with leaders this lead to our next step which was to develop a pilot program with students that were accessing mental health services.**

First pilot implemented for Children & Youth accessing Addiction & Mental Health services in the summer of 2012:

The 8 week Move Your Mood summer pilot was delivered from July 3rd to August 23rd, 2012 to 25 youth ages 11-13 who were either accessing service from Red Deer Mental Health or Unit 39 at Red Deer Regional Hospital. The goal of the pilot was to see if a physical activity group would work as a AHS project for children and youth accessing mental health. The program was well received by the participants and the AHS Therapists that referred youth to the program. This lead to the AHS Children's team wanting to implement a second research study specific to this target group. So the research team came together again

Fall workshop hosted in 2012 to gain more evidence and support:

The Move Your Mood Team hosted a workshop in the Fall of 2012 hoping to gather more evidence about the connection between physical activity and mental health for children and youth. There were 94 professionals that attended the workshop. Key presenters at the event were Dr. Glenda MacQueen, Scott Mitchell from Minding Our Bodies Ontario CMHA, Dr. Scott Oddie & Dr. Anomi Bearden.

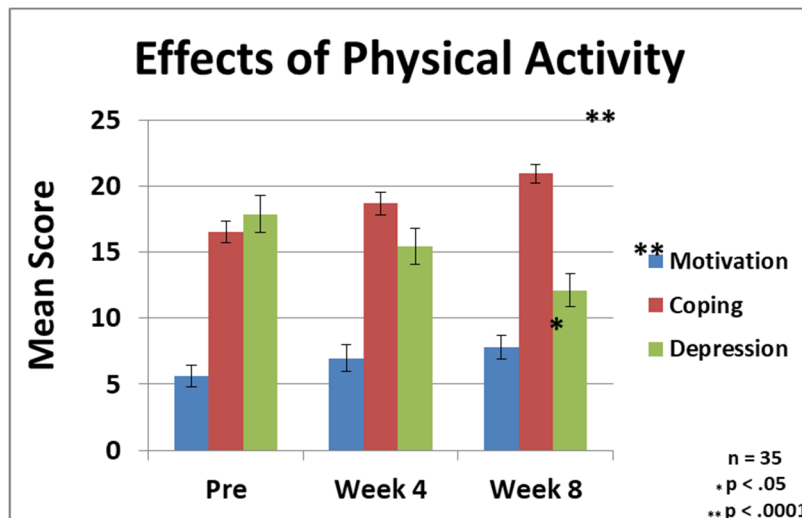


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Move Your Mood Roots and Research

AHS and RDC Research team implement the second research project for Children and Youth accessing Mental Health Services (Most significant results came from this study)

The program was piloted from January to June 2013 for Children and Youth ages 10-17 accessing Mental Health supports with **36 participants** in Red Deer. Referrals to the program were made from Children Mental Health Therapists, Unit 39 & Family School Wellness Workers. Each participant was encouraged to develop their own personal movement plan that was based on their interests and needs. Each participant was asked to exercise three days per week; one day with the MYM group, one day individually with the MYM coach, and one day per week on their own. Assistance with transportation i.e. Bus passes, and health promotion incentives provided by RDC for participants to complete the program and survey's was provided. Red Deer College researched the affects the program had on Physical Activity Perceptions, Coping, Mood & Depression (see attached graph for summary of results.) The main findings were that Children and Youth in the program improved their coping significantly within the first 4 weeks with small improvements in the Depression scale. Then at 8 weeks there was a significant change in the Depression scores. It was also noted at 8 weeks that their motivation to exercise shifted from external motivators to internal motivation which is a benefit to the participants continuing to exercise into the future. This research study was published in the Journal of Psychology and has been accessed by thousands of people since it's release. Please refer to the full study provided.





Move Your Mood Roots and Research

Participants in the study were also asked to fill out a brief questionnaire at the end of the 8 week program that would indicate the impact the Move Your Mood Program had on the participants Physical, Mental/Emotional and Social Wellness. These were self-reported:

	Better – Much Better	No Change	Worse
Stronger Muscles	91.3%	8.7%	0%
Bone & Joint Health	100%	0%	0%
Balance & Posture	73.91%	26.09%	0%
Better Endurance	95.65%	4.53%	0%
Sleep	60.87%	39.13%	0%

	Better- Much Better	No Change	Worse
Mood & Energy	100%	0%	0%
Self Esteem	91.3%	8.7%	0%
Concentration	56.52%	43.48%	0%
Stress/Anxiety	78.26%	21.74%	0%
Depression	82.6%	17.39%	0%

32 out of 34 participants indicated that they have changed their perspective on exercise and would continue to be more physically active after they had completed the program.

34 out of 34 participants stated they saw significant positive changes.

25 out of the 29 parents stated that they have seen their child continue to be more active than they were prior to Move Your Mood, and have seen positive changes in their attitudes toward physical activity.

	Better – Much Better	No Change	Worse
With Family & Friends	91.31%	8.7%	0%
Meeting New People	78.26%	21.74%	0%
Involvement in the Community	69.57%	30.43%	0%

31 out of the 34 participants stated that they were much more involved with their families and friends after being in the Move Your Mood Program, and had continued thereafter.

Upon the completion of the pilot program the AHS Quality Improvement Team also interviewed the Children’s Mental Health team and a survey was sent out to community partners. Their feedback was very positive on the referral process for children & youth on their case load, the quality of the program and the impact they saw with their clients. The Community also saw value in the program and enjoyed partnering to offer high quality facilities and instructors.



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Move Your Mood Roots and Research

MYM program receives funding: Upon completion of the second research study AHS recognized the benefits of the Move Your Mood program. The program was provided with a full time Move Your Mood Coordinator and a budget to run the program 4 times per year for 8 weeks. (Fall, Winter, Spring & Summer). Each 8 week session had 15 referrals from Mental Health Therapists and Community Liaison's in the Community for children and youth ages 11-16. There were additions made to the program as we were only able to focus on the benefits of exercise in the research. The program added other health promotion components including; Fuel Your Body– Healthy Eating, Mindfulness– Heart Math, and Expand Your Mind– positive coping strategies.

Sharing the evidence to expand the reach of Move Your Mood:

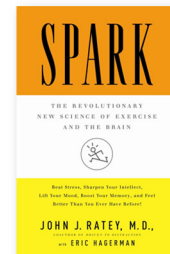
- The Move Your Mood program was highlighted in the Alberta Centre for Active Living WellSpring newsletter in 2016. The Move Your Mood Coordinator was then asked to present the findings at the Spring 2016 Alberta Centre for Active Living Forum “Sweat is the best antidepressant” along with other professionals working on the links between Physical Activity and Mental Health.
- Alberta Health Services highlighted the Move Your Mood program in AHS Insight.
- In March of 2017 a Move Your Mood committee was formed to host a workshop with **Dr. John Ratey** – “*Science of Exercise and the Brain*” to keep the research and conversation going. Over 600 participants attended the workshop from Central Alberta.



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Enhancements to the program adding MYM Family Challenge:

As the message of the Move Your Mood program expanded the Coordinator was asked to continue to share the message beyond the targeted program. This began the Move Your Mood Family Challenge in 2013. The idea was to reach more families and children with the MYM messaging. The program has been offered two times per year to all families in the City of Red Deer. The program has had great success promoting ways families can be active, eat healthy and develop positive relationships. The program models the same format with 8 weeks of creative ideas for families to try. Many amazing partnerships have been developed in the Red Deer Community because of this program.



Move Your Mood Roots and Research

Enhancements to the program adding MYM School Challenge:

In 2018 a partnership with Red Deer Public Schools was developed to expand the message to all Red Deer Public Schools. The idea was to continue to share the Move Your Mood message and reach more children & youth. The School challenge incorporated the core messaging over morning announcements in all elementary, middle and high schools with ideas on how students could be active each week with activities that were already happening within the school.

In 2019 this was to be expanded to both Red Deer Public and Catholic Schools reaching 44 schools in the Red Deer Community.

Enhancements to the program adding MYM Community Challenge:

In the Spring of 2019 the Community Better ParticipACTION challenge was incorporated into the school and family challenge to highlight the amazing ParticipACTION campaign. Partnerships were developed between Move Your Mood and ParticipACTION at this time to share their 24 Better messaging. The Red Deer Community placed 18th in all of Canada in the first ever Community Better Challenge. This was an amazing accomplishment with the population size of Red Deer. The reason Red Deer did so well was due to partnerships developed within the Community and Schools.

Expansion of the program across Central Zone:

In January of 2018 a group from the AMH Health Promotion Team began working to expand the program across Central Zone. Lesson plans were enhanced in each of the core MYM areas; Move Your Body, Mindfulness, Fuel Your Body, and Expand Your Mind. Once the content was complete, three pilots were implemented in the Spring of 2019; in Camrose, Vermillion and Breton. These pilots were successful and additional opportunities are continuing to be offered across Central Zone.